



The Space Countermeasures Hands On Program (Space CHOP)

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Space Vehicles Directorate

Air Force Research Laboratory

FACT SHEET

The Space CHOP represents a unique program within the Department of Defense that is designed to emulate the terrorist and asymmetric threat to U.S. military and national critical infrastructure systems.

At Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., three to four times per year, a select, dedicated group, comprised of junior U.S. military officers and, at times, federal government employees, using open source databases such as the Internet and libraries, seeks to reveal possible weaknesses in the DOD's current and future space systems, or systems critical to other Government agencies

About four months in duration, a typical project mission involves four Air Force junior officers with a technical academic education, although, on occasion, an officer with a non-technical background, such as business, will participate on a team.

At the beginning of each session, the Space CHOP identifies the rules of engagement to the participants and client. As a precautionary measure, they also coordinate the planned event with the customer's security organization, the local Air Force Office of Special Investigations detachment, and other applicable protective entities.

At the midway point of a mission, the simulated terrorist team provides a status briefing for the customer and upon mission completion, the customer agency receives a final, formal classified presentation and report. In addition, they get a list of what the team found in open source documentation, compiled in several binders.

The Air Force Research Laboratory's (AFRL) Space Vehicles Directorate provides administrative oversight of the

Space CHOP, but the Air Force Space Command's (AFSPC) Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC) funds the program core.



Customers have included AFRL, AFSPC, SMC, as well as the Department of Energy and the US Army.

The project has also consulted with U.S. Strategic Command, the Air Force's Space Warfare Center and Space Battlelab, the Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, Missile Defense Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Naval Postgraduate School, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as U. S. Customs and Border Protection.

Looking to attract other participating military services and federal government agencies, the Space CHOP will continue to evolve its unique calling to meet the rapid technological changes impacting today's asymmetric threat environment on the ground or in the heavens. On the other hand, the program remains primarily focused on protecting our military's assets.

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